

**The New Hampshire
Department of Environmental
Services recommends
limiting the amount
of fish that you eat.**

**General
Safe Eating
Guidelines**



Pregnant and nursing women, and women who may get pregnant CAN SAFELY EAT one 8 oz. (227 g.) meal per *month* of freshwater fish.

Children under age seven CAN SAFELY EAT one 3 oz. (85 g.) meal per *month* of fresh- water fish.

All other adults, and children age seven and older, CAN SAFELY EAT four 8 oz. (227 g.) meals per *month* of freshwater fish.

See Fish Consumption Advisory for specific guidelines.

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Is it safe to eat the fish we catch?

Mercury & Other Pollutants in Fish

New Hampshire Department of
Environmental Services
Bureau of Environmental & Occupational
Health

Mercury and Other Pollutants in New Hampshire Fish

Is eating fish bad for you? What about ocean fish?

Eating fish can be part of a healthy diet. It is a good source of protein and is low in fat. You can eat fish and be healthy. Following the guidelines in this brochure will help.

Ocean fish and shellfish have mercury too. Most have low levels of mercury, but swordfish and shark have very high levels. Follow the *Safe Eating Guidelines for Ocean Fish* enclosed in this brochure.

Do some of New Hampshire's lakes and ponds have stricter advisories?

Yes. The DES has issued other specific advisories that apply to certain bodies of water. Follow the *Safe Eating Guidelines for Freshwater Fish* enclosed in this brochure.

Is mercury the only toxic pollutant in fish we need to worry about?

No. There are warnings about PCBs and dioxins, chemicals that can cause cancer and other health problems if too much builds up in your body.

Can't we trim, clean or cook the fish to get rid of the mercury?

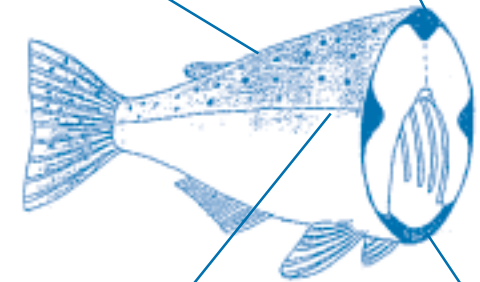
No. The mercury gets into the flesh of the fish. It can't be cut away, cleaned, or cooked out. However, by removing the skin and cutting away other fatty areas of the fish, you may reduce other types of contaminants (such as PCBs and dioxins) that can be in the fatty tissue.

Fish Preparation Guidelines

- ☐ Remove skin.
- ☐ Trim away fatty areas.
- ☐ Use cooking methods that allow fat-laden juices to drip away.

Remove all skin.

Cut away all fat along the back.



Slice off the belly fat.

Cut away a V shaped wedge to remove the dark fatty tissue along the entire length of the fillet.

- Fish drippings or broth may contain higher levels of pollutants.
- Frying seals in pollutants that might be in fish's fat.
- Fillet and remove skin before fish are smoked.



Mercury in fish: The problem you can't see, smell or taste

It's hard to believe that fish that looks, smells, and tastes fine may not be safe to eat. But the truth is that fish caught in New Hampshire lakes, ponds, and rivers have mercury in them. Other states have this problem too. Mercury in the air settles into the waters. It then builds up in the fish. So, older fish have higher levels of mercury than younger fish. Fish that eat other fish, like bass and pickerel, have the highest mercury levels. For these species, it is recommended that people eat fish 12 inches (30 cm.) or less in length.

The harm caused by mercury

Small amounts of mercury can damage a brain starting to form or grow. That's why babies in the womb, nursing babies, and young children are at most risk. Too much mercury may affect behavior and how well they learn, think and problem solve later in life.

Mercury can also harm older children and adults, but it takes larger amounts. It may cause tingling, prickling, numbness in hands and feet, or changes in vision. The Safe Eating Guidelines set limits to protect everyone.



FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY FOR OCEAN FISH & SHELLFISH

The Fish

Bluefish and Striped Bass

Pollutant: PCBs

Swordfish, Shark, Tilefish and King Mackerel

Pollutant: Mercury

Lobster Tomalley

(green substance in the lobster)

Pollutant: PCBs and dioxins

Canned Tuna (6 ounce can)

("White" tuna has more mercury than "light" tuna.)

Pollutant: Mercury

All Other Ocean Fish and Shellfish

(including canned fish and shellfish)

Pollutant: Mercury

Safe Eating Guidelines

Limit: For everyone, 2 meals per month.

Limit: For pregnant and nursing women, women who may get pregnant, and children under 7, avoid consumption.

For all others, 2 meals per month.

Limit: Everyone, avoid consumption.

All other parts of the lobster, no limits as part of a balanced diet.

Limit: For pregnant and nursing women, women who may get pregnant, 1 can of "white" or 2 cans of "light" tuna per week.

For children under 7, 1/2 can of "white" or 1 can of "light" tuna per week.

For all others, no limits as part of a balanced diet.

Limit: For pregnant and nursing women, women who may get pregnant, and children under 7, 2 meals per week.

For all others, no limits as part of a balanced diet.

Stick to the lowest weekly or monthly limits for Freshwater Fish, Ocean Fish and Shellfish. But, don't add limits. For an example, a woman who is pregnant and eats two cans of light tuna per week is advised not to consume any additional meals of other ocean fish or freshwater fish.

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FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY FOR FRESHWATER FISH

Locations of Freshwater Fish

The Fish

Safe Eating Guidelines

General Advisory for All Inland Freshwater Bodies

All Species.....

For pregnant and nursing women, women who may get pregnant, and children under 7, 1 meal per month.
For all others, 4 meals per month.

Bass and Pickerel

Limit consumption to fish 12 inches or less in length.
See meal consumption guidelines above.

May Pond (Washington)
Ashuelot Pond (Washington)
Crystal Lake (Gilmanton)

Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass,

Everyone, avoid consumption.

Comerford and Moore Reservoirs
(Fifteen Mile Falls Chain of the Connecticut)

All Species

For pregnant and nursing women, women who may get pregnant, and children under 7, avoid consumption.
For all others, 2 meals per month.

McIndoes Reservoir
(Fifteen Mile Falls Chain of the Connecticut River)

Yellow Perch

For pregnant and nursing women, women who may get pregnant, and children under 7, 2 meals per month.
For all others, 6 meals per month.

Androscoggin River
(From Berlin to the Maine Border)

All Species.....

Everyone, avoid consumption.

Stick to the lowest weekly or monthly limits for freshwater fish, ocean fish and shellfish. But, don't add limits. For an example, a woman who is pregnant and eats two cans of light tuna